

REMARKS

The attorney for the Applicant would like to express his sincere appreciation to Examiner Jacob Minskey for the courtesies extended during a telephone interview on December 1, 2009. During the interview, the attorney for the Applicant suggested a clarification to the claims to make it unquestionably clear that the machining of the "at least one discrete region to a shallow depth on at least one side of the plates from its inner radius" part way toward its outer radius is accomplished prior to stacking and securing the plates together. The attorney for the Applicant suggested inserting the word "thereafter" immediately prior to the word "stacking" in clause b). Examiner Minskey suggested that additionally the word "machined" be inserted immediately prior to the word "plates" in clause b).

Examiner Minskey indicated that a Request for Continued Examination would have to be submitted in order for the claims to be entered.

It is believed that with these amendments to claim 1 and similar amendments to the other independent claims, the claims clearly distinguish over the prior art of record, are unobvious to a person skilled in the art and are, therefore, patentable.

The only reference applied with respect to the independent claims is Masayuki, JP 02-295706. In the Advisory Action, the Examiner states that the partial translation of Masayuki supplied with the response dated October 23, 2009 "...does not explicitly say that the slit is formed after the fact." The Examiner states that the language of Masayuki can be read either way and that the

"...broadest reasonable interpretation allows for either reading."

It is respectfully submitted that the partial translation of Masayuki supplied with the response dated October 23, 2009 is in fact explicit and that the only reasonable interpretation of it is that the narrow slits 6 are formed after the plurality of segments 3 are joined together. This is borne out in the partial translation starting with the last paragraph of page 1 which discusses "...the laminated body into which the plurality of segments 3 are integrated..." It continues in the first paragraph of page 2 of the partial translation which states "In addition, on the tread mold side of the laminated body, a narrow slit 6 is formed between the segments 3 and 3 which are contiguous to each other." It is respectfully submitted that the above quoted statement makes it clear that only one interpretation can be given and that is that the narrow slits 6 are formed after the segments 3 and 3 are joined together.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims 1-3, 5-10, 13 and 21-30 are respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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